



# Amherst Conservation Commission

## FY23 Strategic Plan

# Key Points

- ACC is following a “Conservation Plan” that guides its activities and ensures compliance with RSA 36-A
- ACC manages 2700 acres (13% of Amherst)
- ACC’s funding strategy attempts to balance expenses from its Town Budget with support from its Conservation Fund

# Mission and Strategies

The Amherst Conservation Commission (ACC) protects and manages the town's biodiversity and natural resources, and promotes the public use of natural open space for low-impact outdoor recreation that is consistent with conservation.

The ACC's strategies for pursuing its mission are to:

- Influence zoning, planning and zoning adjustments
- Acquire property and development rights where appropriate for conservation
- Manage town forests
- Manage town grasslands
- Control invasive species on ACC-managed lands
- Promote low-impact outdoor recreation
- Educate citizens about Amherst's biodiversity and natural resources

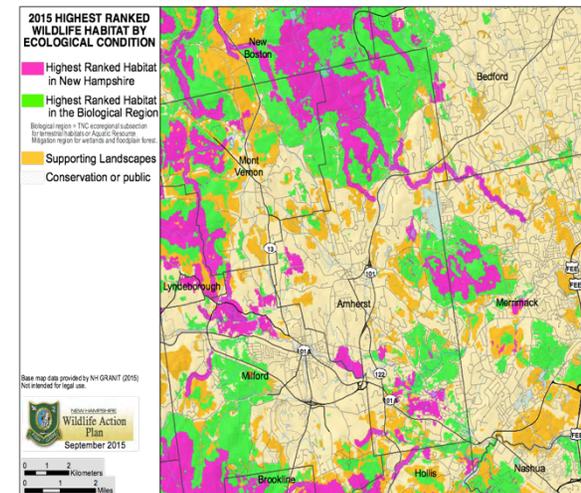
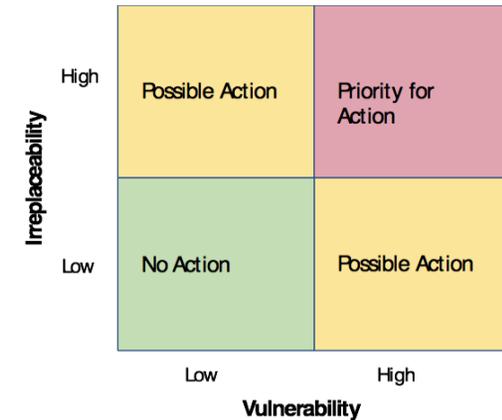
# Strategy 1. Influence Zoning and Planning

- Provide input on Zoning Ordinances
- Work with Planning Board to ensure Amherst's natural resources are fully addressed in the town's Master Plan
- Advise Planning Board on conditional use permit applications for project impacting wetlands and water resources
- Review permit applications to NHDES for impacts to wetlands and shore lands



# Strategy 2. Acquisitions

- Acquire properties or development rights for the purpose of conserving priority lands in town
- Conservation Fund used for acquisitions – revenue from 100% of the Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) and 100% of profits from town forests
- Prioritization scheme developed. ACC does *not* endorse generic % land target
- Utilize new Town bonding authority to acquire additional open space for conservation and public access



# Strategy 3. Manage Town Forests

- ACC manages town forests. These include 10 areas, totaling 1566 acres
- Prepare updated Forest Management plan
- Management has 3 objectives:
  - a) forest health and biodiversity conservation
  - b) public recreation
  - c) revenue generation
- Significant shift to custom GIS planning application



# Strategy 4. Manage Grasslands

- ACC serves as the manager of various grasslands. These include 14 areas, totaling 250 acres
- ACC has developed a management plan for each of its actively managed properties. Management addresses conservation needs set forth in NH State Wildlife Action Plan
- Work cooperatively with Rec Dept and the NH Coop Extension to develop Buck Meadow for conservation and recreational use



# Strategy 5. Control Invasive Species

- ACC will seek to control invasive *plant* species throughout Amherst
  - Direct control of invasive species on ACC managed public lands
  - Collaborative control with DPW
  - Encourage private landowners to control invasives



# Strategy 6. Low-impact Outdoor Recreation

- ACC promotes low-impact outdoor recreation on the lands that it manages
  - >25 miles of trails
  - Hiking, biking & X-country skiing
  - Hunting
- Major contributions of labor and materials from Amherst residents, Eagle Scout projects, and regional trails organizations (e.g. NEMBA)



# Strategy 7. Public Education & Outreach

- Developed a PE&O Plan
- Includes three major objectives
  - Outreach & Engagement
  - Partnerships & Collaboratives
  - Communications & Media
- Strengthens the ACC's mission and relationships with Amherst residents



# Financial Strategy

## Town Budget

- Annual costs that directly affect citizen enjoyment and/or participation.
  - Infrastructure (bridges, kiosks, signage, etc)
  - Trail development and upkeep
  - Educational outreach (workshops, etc)
  - Professional development (commissioner education)
  - Administrative support
  - Invasives control planning & management

## Conservation Fund

- Costs affecting flora and fauna habitat
  - Property Acquisitions
  - Surveys, Legal costs for potential acquisitions
  - Habitat improvement (planning efforts, timber harvests, mowing, etc)
  - Capital purchases (machinery, tools, etc)
  - As directed by town warrant

**Budget Comparison- '21,22 Vs '23 Proposed**

01-4611

	<b>'21 Budget</b>	<b>'22 Budget</b>	<b>Proposed '23 Budget</b>
10-1115 <b>Wages</b>	\$3,057.00	\$3,509.38	\$2,100.00
20-1220 <b>Social Security</b>	190.00	217.58	130.20
20-1225 <b>Medicare</b>	44.00	50.89	30.45
20-1294 <b>Educ. Training Prof Dev</b>	750.00	750.00	750.00
20-2482 <b>Surveying</b>	0	0	0
40-2483 <b>Land Management</b>	0	0	0
40-2484 <b>Meadow Maintenance</b>	0	0	0
40-2486 <b>Water Cross Repair &amp; Maint.</b>	3,000.00	3,000.00	2,500.00
40-2487 <b>Invasives Mitigation</b>	3,000.00	3,800.00	3,800.00
40-2488 <b>Signage</b>	1,500.00	1,500.00	2,400.00
40-2489 <b>Kiosk</b>	0	0	0
50-2560 <b>Dues &amp; Subscriptions</b>	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00
50-2561 <b>Educational Outreach</b>	2,250.00	2,500.00	1,250.00
60-2625 <b>Postage</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$14,991.00</b>	<b>\$16,527.85</b>	<b>\$14,160.65</b>